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131400Z Feb 01

CONFIDENTIAL PTQ0502

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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	CIAE-00	SMEC-00	DODE-00
	DOEE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-00	VC-00	H-01
	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01
	NSAE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00
	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	BBG-00
	R-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-01	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00
	SAS-00	SWCI-00	/010W				

-----C50DEC 131438Z /38

FM AMEMBASSY HARARE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8220  
INFO NSC WASHDC  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY  
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000741

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/S, AF/PD (COX, HOWARD, SANDERS)

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR JENDAYI FRAZER

LONDON FOR GURNEY

PARIS FOR WILLIAMS

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PASS USAID FOR AFR/SA C. PALMA

NAIROBI FOR PFLAUMER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/13/11  
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [KPAO](#) [KDEM](#) [ZI](#)  
SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE INTENSIFIES SQUEEZE ON  
THE INDEPENDENT MEDIA

CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE D'AFFAIRES EARL M. IRVING FOR  
REASONS 1.5 B/D.

11. (C) SUMMARY: THE GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE'S ASSAULT ON THE INDEPENDENT MEDIA HAS NOT ABATED IN THE WAKE OF THE BOMBING OF THE "DAILY NEWS." THE CURRENT ATTACK ON PRESS FREEDOM IS, HOWEVER, MORE SOPHISTICATED AND MAY IN THE LONG RUN BE MORE EFFECTIVE THAN THE DESTRUCTION OF THE "DAILY NEWS" PRINTING PRESSES. THE METHODOLOGY INCLUDES SELECTIVE ACCREDITATION OF JOURNALISTS, EXORBITANT FEES FOR CREDENTIALING FOREIGN PRESS, DENYING ACCESS AND INFORMATION TO THE INDEPENDENT MEDIA, AND LOOMING RESTRICTIONS ON FOREIGN OWNERSHIP OR SUPPORT TO INDEPENDENT MEDIA. THE GOZ IS PULLING OUT ALL THE STOPS TO MUZZLE THE INDEPENDENT PRESS AND THE PUBLIC'S ACCESS TO INFORMATION, A KEY COMPONENT IN ITS STRATEGY FOR THE 2002 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) IN SPITE OF INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY MINISTER JONATHAN MOYO'S (UNCONVINCING AND TEPID) EXPRESSION OF CONCERN AFTER THE JANUARY 28 BOMBING OF THE "DAILY  
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NEWS" PRINTING PRESS, THE GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE'S (GOZ) CAMPAIGN TO RESTRICT FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION HAS INTENSIFIED. A FEBRUARY 3 NOTICE IN GOVERNMENT-OWNED NEWSPAPERS INSTRUCTED ALL JOURNALISTS TO APPLY FOR NEW CREDENTIALS TO COVER PARLIAMENT. THE REGISTRATION PERIOD RUNS THROUGH FEBRUARY 16, BUT THE APPARENT INTENT OF THIS MOVE IS TO ALLOW THE GOVERNMENT TO RESTRICT PARLIAMENTARY COVERAGE TO "FRIENDLY" JOURNALISTS.

13. (C) THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION HAS ALSO SCRAPPED CENTRALIZED ISSUANCE OF PRESS CREDENTIALS FOR COVERING THE GOZ. JOURNALISTS MUST NOW APPLY TO EACH MINISTRY OR BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT FOR THE CREDENTIAL REQUIRED FOR ACCESS. INDEPENDENT JOURNALISTS ARE ALREADY FEELING THE EFFECTS OF GOZ FIATS BANNING THEM FROM SOME OFFICES AND EVENTS. ALL LEVELS OF THE ZIMBABWE REPUBLIC POLICE, EVEN POLICE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICIALS, NOW FLATLY REFUSE TO SPEAK TO JOURNALISTS FROM THE INDEPENDENT MEDIA. INDEPENDENT MEDIA HAVE ALSO

RECENTLY BEEN BARRED FROM ATTENDING GOZ PRESS  
CONFERENCES AND WERE BANNED FROM THE PUBLIC VIEWING OF  
LAURENT KABILA'S BODY, AN EVENT THE GOVERNMENT-OWNED  
MEDIA COVERED FULLY.

14. (U) IN JUNE 2000 THE GOZ INITIATED A US\$100  
ACCREDITATION FEE FOR FOREIGN JOURNALISTS WISHING TO  
COVER ZIMBABWE'S PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. THAT FEE  
REMAINS IN FORCE, SUPPLEMENTED BY A US\$500 FEE FOR A  
TEMPORARY IMPORT PERMIT REQUIRED TO BRING TELEVISION  
EQUIPMENT INTO ZIMBABWE. THESE FEES ARE AFFORDABLE BY  
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INTERNATIONAL MEDIA STANDARDS, BUT HAVE HAD THE EFFECT  
OF REDUCING COVERAGE OF EVENTS IN ZIMBABWE BY REGIONAL  
NEWS ORGANIZATIONS, FREE-LANCE REPORTERS AND  
STRINGERS.

15. (C) DURING THE WEEK OF FEBRUARY 4 MINISTER MOYO  
PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED HIS DETERMINATION TO LIMIT FOREIGN  
OWNERSHIP OF MEDIA IN ZIMBABWE. FURTHERMORE, HE SAID  
THAT INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR ZIMBABWEAN  
MEDIA SHOULD BE BANNED. THESE STATEMENTS ARE DIRECT  
THREATS TO THE INDEPENDENT MEDIA, AND SEEM TO REFER  
DIRECTLY TO THE INTERNATIONAL FUND-RAISING CAMPAIGN TO  
HELP THE "DAILY NEWS" RECOVER FROM THE BOMBING OF ITS  
PRESSES.

16. (C) THE GOVERNMENT-OWNED DAILY "THE HERALD"  
INITIALLY TRUMPETED THE FACT THAT ITS PRESSES WERE  
PRODUCING THE "DAILY NEWS" 3 TIMES PER WEEK  
IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE "DAILY NEWS" BOMBING. THEIR  
HEADLINE WAS "HERALD RESCUES DAILY NEWS." THAT  
ARRANGEMENT, STRUCK BY THE PAPER'S MANAGING DIRECTOR  
STRICTLY AS A MONEYMAKING COMMERCIAL DEAL, WAS NIXED  
TWO WEEKS LATER BY "POLITICAL BOSSES." THE "DAILY  
NEWS" IS NOW SCRAMBLING TO FIND ANOTHER COMMERCIAL  
PRINTER TO COVER THE 3 DAYS PER WEEK WHEN THEIR

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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	CIAE-00	SMEC-00	INL-00
	DODE-00	DOEE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-00	VC-00
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	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00
	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-01	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00
	/010W						

-----C50DF4 131439Z /38

R 131400Z FEB 01  
FM AMEMBASSY HARARE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8221  
INFO NSC WASHDC  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY  
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 HARARE 000741

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TAGS: PHUM PGOV KPAO KDEM ZI  
SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE INTENSIFIES SQUEEZE ON  
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CURRENT COMMERCIAL PRINTER CANNOT PUBLISH THE PAPER.

17. (C) COMMENT: THIS SYSTEMATIC ATTACK ON THE  
INDEPENDENT MEDIA FITS IN NEATLY WITH THE SIMULTANEOUS  
GOZ EFFORT TO COW THE JUDICIARY AND THE OPPOSITION,  
AND IS A KEY COMPONENT IN THE GOVERNMENT'S STRATEGY TO  
RESTRICT THE PUBLIC'S ACCESS TO ALTERNATIVE VIEWS IN  
THE RUN-UP TO THE 2002 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. TAKEN

BY ITSELF, THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE INDEPENDENT MEDIA  
IS AN INSIDIOUS THREAT TO FREEDOM OF THE PRESS. IN  
COMBINATION WITH THE ATTACKS AGAINST THE JUDICIARY AND  
THE OPPOSITION, IT IS A DANGEROUS ASSAULT ON  
FUNDAMENTAL, CONSTITUTIONALLY-GUARANTEED HUMAN RIGHTS  
AND WILL BOLSTER ZIMBABWE'S INCREASINGLY AUTHORITARIAN  
TREND. END COMMENT.

IRVING

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